

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly newscast

March 11th 2013

Lessons prepared by Justine Light & Barbara Edmondson

Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as, an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca

<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

budget (spending plan) infrastructure (roads and buildings) consecutive (one after another) provided (given) freeze (stop) promised (said it was going to happen) post-secondary (university/college) figure out (solve a problem)

Extra definition to help you understand the reading:

Deficit – when there is more spending than earning; a budget that creates a debt

1. It is important to make a _____ so you are able to save money for your future.
2. I ran out of money for groceries on three _____ months last year so I had to use my credit card.
3. _____ students need to save money for their expensive tuition.
4. The government uses our tax dollars to build needed _____.
5. I was disappointed when the refund I was _____ by the store was given to me as a credit note instead of cash.
6. The government will _____ spending on employment training.
7. My brother and I need to _____ how to take care of our elderly mother.
8. The University _____ paid vacation when I worked there.

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **true** or **false**. Write your answer in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ The Alberta budget was presented on Wednesday.
2. ____ The Alberta government will have a fifth consecutive deficit budget.
3. ____ There will be no new taxes.
4. ____ There will be some major cuts.
5. ____ Funding will not be provided to pay for the interchange at Macleod Trail and Highway 22X
6. ____ There will be a 7% reduction in money going to post-secondary schools.

Discussion Question

What do you think are the most important things for a government to think about when creating a budget? Do you think it is okay for a government to have a deficit, to spend more than it has?

News story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word	Definition
	1. coffin	a) crying
	2. crowd	b) ruling a country
	3. supporters	c) worried about the future
	4. weeping	d) quality of life; access to basic needs
	5. nervous	e) casket, a box where a dead body is placed
	6. stock up	f) promises
	7. reign	g) a large group of people
	8. raised	h) buy many things to prepare for a shortage
	9. standard of living	i) people who believe in someone or something
	10. guarantees	j) increased

Extra definitions to help you understand the reading:

procession – a group of people moving towards some place

ambassador – a representative from one country

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. On Wednesday _____ walked along side Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's coffin.	a) protesters b) a crowd of supporters
2. Other Venezuelans went to supermarkets and gas stations to stock up on supplies, _____.	a) preparing for the worst b) to avoid the procession
3. _____ Venezuela, Hugo Chavez died of cancer.	a) After 14 years of ruling b) After 58 years of being president of
4. Hugo Chavez was well known for being _____.	a) a strict and powerful leader. b) an anti-American
5. Hugo Chavez _____ of Venezuela's poorest people.	a) had the support b) raised the standard of living
6. The organization Human Rights Watch said Chavez _____ guarantees.	a) ignored human rights b) supported human rights

Discussion Question

What are the positive and negative points of having the same leader in a country for 14 years? How long can someone lead in your home country? Does the leader there have as much support as Hugo Chavez seems to have had?

News story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary - Read the definitions below, and then put the sentences in the correct order. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Words and Definitions
secret – something we don't tell others, private information
dropped a hint – to give people a clue
expecting – pregnant, going to have a baby
former – previously called/named
gender – male or female

1. someone you When a tells secret others. with it share not should you

When someone tells you a secret

2. The on exam. teacher the dropped questions a hint about the

3. When expecting a is woman she be must careful eats. she what

4. My former changed I name when married. got

5. child before Many born want to know it's the gender of their parents

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Chronological order

Put the following sentences in the order they occur in time. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. 1 Duchess of Cambridge and Prince William are expecting a baby.
2. _____ Kate was heard to say, "Thank you, I will take that for my d..."
3. _____ Kate said that they did not know the gender of the baby.
4. _____ On Tuesday someone in the crowd gave former Kate Middleton a teddy bear.
5. _____ A woman standing near Kate asked her if she was going to say daughter.
6. _____ Then Kate said the couple would not tell anyone the child's gender.
7. _____ The Duchess of Cambridge may have accidently dropped a hint about a royal secret.

Discussion Question

Would you want to know the gender of your child before it was born? Why or why not?

Language Focus

Identifying the Simple Past

We often use the simple past verb tense when we are reporting the news. The simple past is used when the action occurred in the past, but is no longer occurring now. In the second story, about Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez the past tense is used to talk about Chavez because he is no longer alive. In the story about former Kate Middleton, the event occurred last week. The events are over, so the reporter uses the past tense.

Verbs are grouped into regular and irregular verbs.

To change regular verbs into the past tense we simply add 'ed', but irregular verbs are changed in some way to create the past tense. Irregular verbs need to be memorized.

Here are some verbs that appear in the first story

Regular verbs			Irregular verbs		
pass	–	passed	is	–	was
die	–	died	are	–	were
walk	–	walked	say	–	say
order	–	ordered	go	–	went

Listen to the audio clips again and try to identify all the past tense verbs you hear. Decide if they are regular or irregular verbs. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Regular verbs	Irregular verbs

Transcripts of Weekly news stories

	MARCH 8 TH WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, this is Carla Beynon You're listening to Learning English with CBC for March 8 th .	0:00
Story 1	Alberta will have a sixth consecutive deficit, borrow 4 billion dollars to pay for infrastructure projects like roads and schools, and freeze spending. On Thursday, Finance Minister Doug Horner presented the provincial budget. There are no tax increases, but some areas are seeing major cuts. Calgary's mayor says the budget could have been worse for the city. Funding will still be provided for an interchange at Macleod Trail and Highway 22X. However, the city will not be receiving as much money as previously promised for major infrastructure projects. Alberta's post-secondary institutions are taking a hit. The President of the University of Calgary says she was surprised by a 7 % cut to advanced education. Elizabeth Cannon says the university will work with student leaders as officials figure out how to deal with the cuts.	0:10
Story 2	A coffin carrying the body of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez passed by a huge crowd of supporters Wednesday, on its way to lie in state. Tens of thousands were in the streets or walked along with the casket in Caracas, many of them weeping. But away from the procession, nervous Venezuelans went to supermarkets and gas stations to stock up on supplies, preparing for the worst, one day after the 58-year-old Chavez died of cancer. During his 14-year reign, Chavez was well-known for being an anti-American. He called then U.S. president George W. Bush a donkey and the devil. Chavez also called Barack Obama a clown. A former Canadian ambassador to Venezuela said Chavez raised the standard of living of the nation's poorest people. But the organization Human Rights Watch said Chavez ignored human rights guarantees.	1:15
Story 3	It's a royal secret, but the Duchess of Cambridge may have accidentally dropped a hint about the baby she and Prince William are expecting. When a member of the crowd at a public appearance on Tuesday gave the former Kate Middleton a teddy bear, Kate was heard to say, "Thank you, I will take that for my d..." before she stopped. A woman who was standing near Kate, told news reporters that she asked Kate if she had been about to say, 'daughter'. At first, Kate said that the royal couple did not know the baby's gender. Then, Kate said that the couple would not tell anyone the child's gender.	2:18

Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary

1. It is important to make a budget so you are able to save money for your future.
2. I ran out of money for groceries on three consecutive months last year so I had to use my credit card.
3. Post secondary students need to save money for their expensive tuition.
4. The government uses our tax dollars to build needed infrastructure
5. I was disappointed when the refund I was promised by the store was given to me as a credit note instead of cash.
6. The government will freeze spending on employment training.
7. My brother and I need to figure out how to take care of our elderly mother.
8. The University provided paid vacation when I worked there.

Listening

1. F The Alberta budget was presented on Wednesday.
2. F The Alberta government will have a fifth consecutive deficit budget.
3. T There will be no new taxes.
4. T There will be some major cuts.
5. F Funding will not be provided to pay for the interchange at Macleod Trail and Highway 22X
6. T There will be a 7% reduction in money going to post-secondary schools.

News story 2

Vocabulary

Answer	Word	Definition
e	1. coffin	a) crying
g	2. crowd	b) ruling a country
i	3. supporters	c) worried about the future
a	4. weeping	d) quality of life; access to basic needs
c	5. nervous	e) casket, a box where a dead body is placed
h	6. stock up	f) promises
b	7. reign	g) a large group of people
j	8. raised	h) buy many things to prepare for a shortage
d	9. standard of living	i) people who believe in someone or something
f	10. guarantees	j) increased

Listening

1. On Wednesday _____ walked along	a) protesters
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side Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's coffin.	b) a crowd of supporters
2. Other Venezuelans went to supermarkets and gas stations to stock up on supplies, _____.	a) preparing for the worst b) to avoid the procession
3. _____ Venezuela, Hugo Chavez died of cancer.	a) After 14 years of ruling b) After 58 years of being president of
4. Hugo Chavez was well known for being _____. _____.	a) a strict and powerful leader. b) an anti-American
5. Hugo Chavez _____ of Venezuela's poorest people.	a) had the support b) raised the standard of living
6. The organization Human Rights Watch said Chavez _____ guarantees.	a) ignored human rights b) supported human rights

News story 3

Vocabulary

1. When someone tells you a secret you should not share it with others.
2. The teacher dropped a hint about the questions on the exam.
3. When a woman is expecting she must be careful what she eats.
4. My former name changed when I got married.
5. Many parents want to know the gender of their child before it's born.

Listening

1. 1 Duchess of Cambridge and Prince William are expecting a baby.
2. 4 Kate was heard to say, "Thank you, I will take that for my d..."
3. 6 Kate said that they did not know the gender of the baby.
4. 3 On Tuesday someone in the crowd gave former Kate Middleton a teddy bear.
5. 5 A woman standing near Kate asked her if she was going to say daughter.
6. 7 Then Kate said the couple would not tell anyone the child's gender.
7. 2 The Duchess of Cambridge may have accidentally dropped a hint about a royal secret.

Language Focus

Regular verbs	Irregular verbs
passed, walked, died, called, raised, dropped, stopped, asked	were, went, was, said gave, was, told, said, did